

The Missing Memoranda
1962-1966

STATINTL

THE SECRET PAPERS They Didn't Publish

The Makers of the Indochina War:

Strategy and counter-strategy from highly classified documents not published by the New York Times and the Washington Post, leaked to NATIONAL REVIEW

October 1964: The Air Force and the CIA: Who Says A, Must Say B

In early September, 1964, President Johnson appointed a special inter-departmental, inter-agency committee, referred to as OVERLOOK, to review the record of US activities in, and in relation to, Indochina from 1950 (the date of US recognition of Bao Dai, the first active intervention in the Indochinese conflict). The committee was instructed to submit its report and conclusions to the NSC prior to the end of the month, in conjunction with the new policy directives under discussion and due for decision in the first week of October. It was the normal practice of such committees, special or standing, as it was of the NSC, JCS, etc., to reach final agreement on a single report through discussion and, when necessary, compromise of any divergencies in viewpoint. In the case of OVERLOOK, however, two members--not named, but identified as from the Air Force and CIA--declined to endorse the report, and insisted on submitting a "minority" document, not so much disagreeing with the approved text as adding a further section. It is not clear whether this appendix was ever actually placed before the NSC or seen by the President.

out essential dispute. E.g.:

Memorandum from Secretary of Defense McNamara to President Kennedy, 8 Nov 1961: "... The Joint Chiefs, Mr. Gilpatrick and I... are inclined to recommend that we do commit the United States to the clear objective of preventing the fall of South Vietnam to Communism and that we support this commitment by the necessary military action. ... If we act in this way, the ultimate possible extent of our military commitment must be faced. ..."

Memorandum from Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara to President Kennedy, 11 Nov 1961:

a) UNITED STATES NATIONAL INTERESTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

1. As in numerous other reports, memoranda and recommendations drawn up since 1951 for JCS, NSC, SD, the President, various ad hoc committees, etc., the report of OVERLOOK fails to accept the implications of its own data

and analysis, and therefore cannot serve as a correct guide for policy and plans.

2. From 1950 on, the nature and significance of US interest in Southeast Asia have been repeatedly stated, with